

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): An iron-protein hydrolysate complex which comprises ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein having a molecular weight in the range of about 2,000 to about 6,000.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (original): A complex according to claim 1 in which the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein is microbial protease hydrolysate.

Claim 4 (original): A complex according to claim 3 in which the microbial protease is obtained from *Aspergillus oryzae* and contains both endo-peptidase and exo-peptidase.

Claim 5 (original): A complex according to claim 1 in which partially hydrolyzed egg white protein is a microbial protease hydrolysate obtained by hydrolyzing egg white protein with a protease obtained from *Aspergillus oryzae* and containing both endo-peptidase and exo-peptidase, and a protease obtained from *Bacillus licheniformis* and containing endo-proteinase.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A complex according to claim 1 which contains about 4.5% to about 10% by dried weight of ferrous irons.

Claim 7 (original): A complex according to claim 1 which is stable at neutral pH but disassociates at a pH below about 3.

Claim 8 (previously presented): An iron-protein hydrolysate complex which comprises ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein which is a microbial protease hydrolysate; the microbial protease contains both endo-peptidase and exo-peptidase, the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein has a molecular weight in the range of about 2,000 to about 6,000.

Claims 9-10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (previously presented): A complex according to claim 8 which contains about 4.5% to about 10% by dried weight of ferrous ions.

Claim 12 (original): A complex according to claim 8 which is stable at neutral pH but disassociates at a pH below about 3.

Claim 13 (previously presented): An iron-protein hydrolysate complex which comprises ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein; the complex containing about 1% to about 10% by dried weight of ferrous ions, the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein has a molecular weight in the range of about 2,000 to about 6,000.

Claims 14-15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (original): A complex according to claim 13 in which the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein is microbial protease hydrolysate.

Claim 17 (original): A complex according to claim 13 in which the fungal protease contains both endo-peptidase and exo-peptidase.

Claim 18 (original): A complex according to claim 13 which is stable at neutral pH but disassociates at a pH below about 3.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A sterilized liquid beverage which contains lipid and a stable iron fortification system, the iron fortification system comprising an iron-protein hydrolysate complex of ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein, the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein has a molecular weight in the range of about 2,000 to about 6,000.

Claim 20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (previously presented): A sterilized liquid beverage which contains polyphenols and a stable iron fortification system, the iron fortification system comprising an iron-protein hydrolysate complex of ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein, the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein has a molecular weight in the range of about 2,000 to about 6,000.

Claim 22 (canceled)

Claim 23 (original): A beverage powder which contains lipid and a stable iron fortification system, the iron fortification system comprising an iron protein hydrolysate complex of ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein.

Claim 24 (canceled)

Claim 25 (previously presented): A process for preparing an iron fortification system, the process comprising:

enzymatically hydrolyzing an egg white protein using a microbial protease to provide a partially hydrolyzed egg white protein;

adding a ferrous source to the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein under acidic conditions; and

raising the pH to 6.5 to 7.5 for forming a ferrous-hydrolyzed egg white protein complex as the iron fortification system, the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein has a molecular weight in the range of about 2,000 to about 6,000.

Claim 26 (previously presented): A complex according to claim 1 which contains about 1% to about 2% by dried weight of ferrous ions.

Claim 27 (previously presented): A complex according to claim 8 which contains about 1% to about 2% by dried weight of ferrous ions.

Claim 28 (previously presented): A complex according to claim 13 which contains about 4.5% to about 10% by dried weight of ferrous ions.

Claim 29 (new): A sterilized liquid beverage which contains lipid and a stable iron fortification system, the iron fortification system comprising an iron-protein hydrolysate complex of ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein, the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein has a molecular weight in the range of about 2,000 to about 6,000 wherein the sterilized liquid beverage is a chocolate containing beverage.

Claim 30 (new): A sterilized liquid beverage which contains polyphenols and a stable iron fortification system, the iron fortification system comprising an iron-protein hydrolysate complex of ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein, the partially hydrolyzed egg white protein has a molecular weight in the range of about 2,000 to about 6,000 wherein the sterilized liquid beverage is a tea beverage.

Claim 31 (new): A beverage powder which contains lipid and a stable iron fortification system, the iron fortification system comprising an iron protein hydrolysate complex of ferrous ions chelated to partially hydrolyzed egg white protein wherein the beverage powder contains cocoa.